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Justice in Education

A Word for Peace

BY

W. SANDAY, D.D., LL.D., Litt.D.

LADY MARGARET PROFESSOR AND CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD
CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO THE KING

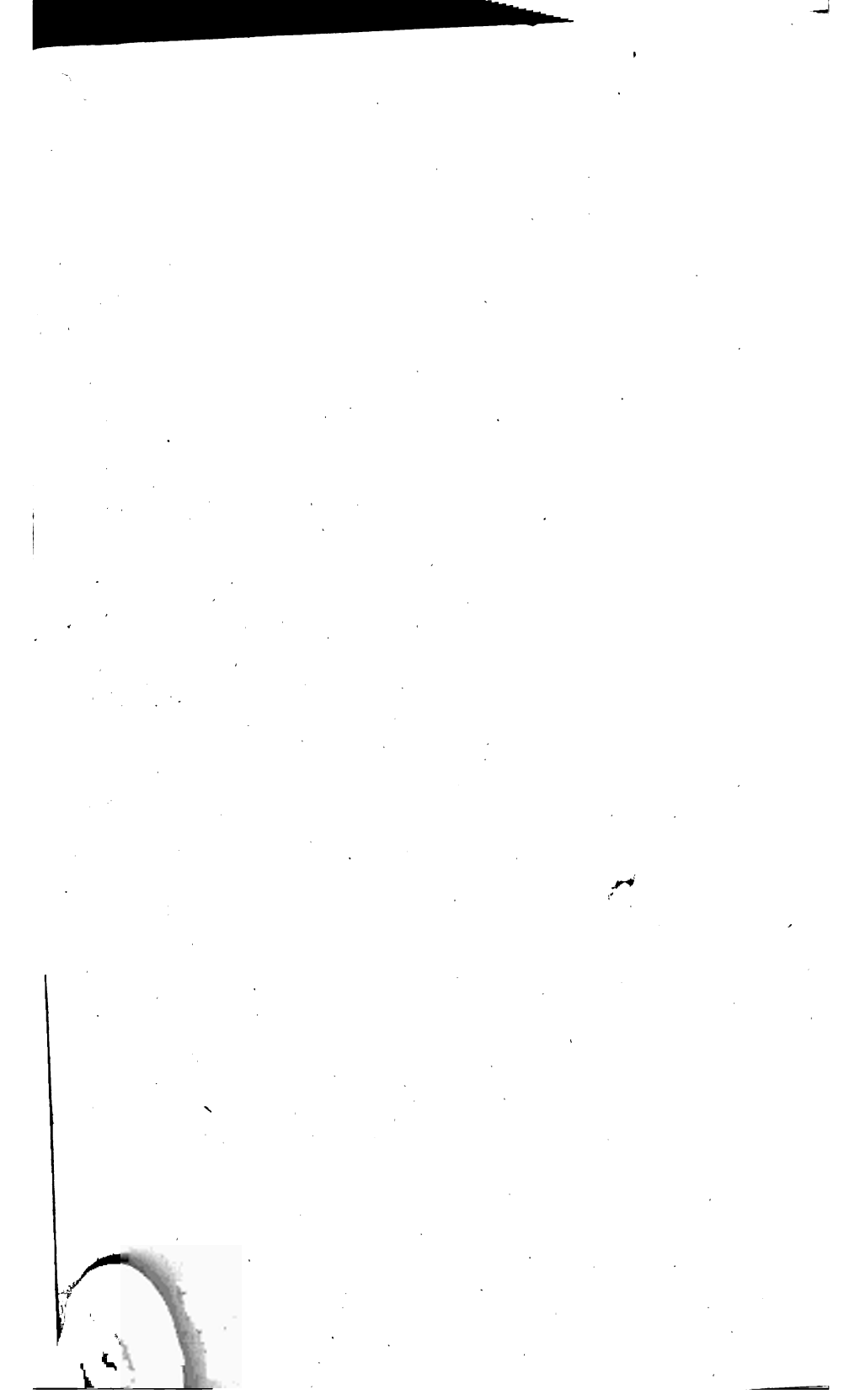
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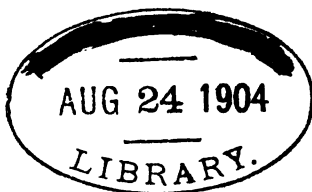
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MAY I prefix to these pages a few words of personal explanation? In obedience to a strong impulse—which I have treated as though it were a 'call,' whether it deserves the name or not—I have turned aside from my proper work at a moment when I could ill afford to turn from it. But with this effort, such as it is, all the digression that I can permit myself is exhausted. I know beforehand that it would be wrong for me to be drawn into any further discussion, public or private. But, if I ask to be excused from this, it is certainly not from any presumptuous idea that what I have written is not capable of correction, or indeed from any cause more recondite than sheer want of time. I cast these crumbs upon the waters to sink or to swim: if they sink, no one will be troubled any further; if they swim, it will be by the grace of God, who will do with them what He pleases.

W. S.

Oxford, January, 1904.

JUSTICE IN EDUCATION

THE writer of this has no dearer wish at his heart than to see English Christians working together harmoniously. By that he does not mean any large extension of organic union—the time for which is certainly not yet—but only a truce, ‘a truce of God,’ in which, for the sake of doing God’s work in the world, His divided people consent to lay aside contentions among themselves.

He says advisedly a truce between English Christians, because he is well aware that there is an issue to be met and a battle to be fought ; but it is not between Christians among themselves, but between Christians and non-Christians, between Christianity on the one hand, and the forces of Materialism, Secularism, and Atheism, which make their gain out of Christian divisions, on the other. In this battle the writer would fain see Churchman and Nonconformist, Roman and Anglican, on the same side.

It is not so very long since events seemed to be moving happily in this direction. The federation of Free Churches was itself a marked step in advance. That the Nonconformist bodies should compose their own differences was a necessary preliminary to the composing of differences between themselves and Churchmen. And if the immediate consequence has seemed to be rather to sharpen the edge and increase the momentum of antagonism to the Church of England, that was only to be expected ; the gathering waves would probably subside again after a time.

But at the present moment there is a deeper cleavage. The controversy about education has reached an acute stage. The two armies stand embattled over against each other, and the collision seems imminent, if it has not already begun.

The sadness of it is that in spite of all that has been said and all the efforts that have been made, the two sides even yet do not understand each other. The one has a keen sense of wrong, which the other cannot bring itself to consider a wrong at all. Thus the common meeting-ground between them is wanting.

A state of things like this is one in which it seems to me that no lover of his country can acquiesce. He must at least do what in him lies to find a way out of it, undeterred by the probability of failure. Even if he does but add another to the failures that have gone before, his conscience will have been cleared, his duty done.

The object, then, of this pamphlet is to conciliate. If it fails to conciliate, it fails altogether. That consideration must be kept in view throughout.

I am aware that the task is delicate. I am aware that Nonconformist opinion in particular is in a very sensitive state. It is apt to see 'taunts' and recriminations even where they are not intended.

Let me therefore once for all utterly disclaim anything of the kind. The last thing that I desire to do is either to taunt or to recriminate—and that, not only as a matter of policy but because I really do not feel the temptation to it. Nothing is cheaper, and nothing more futile, than the little 'scores' in argument on which controversialists pride themselves. The object I have in view is surely too serious to leave room for these.

I would earnestly ask my Nonconformist readers—if such there are—to give me credit for two feelings that are no accident of the moment but deep and permanent.

(1) I have sympathy enough to feel a sincere admiration for the Nonconformist type of character. There still lives in my memory a paper of Kingsley's which I read almost as a boy. It had in it a kind of refrain, 'No poetry in these old Puritans?' and it went on to paint a picture of a young Cromwellian from the Fens going to the wars

with his Bible stuck in his jackboot, coming back to the dykes and the poplars and the reed-beds and the farm, and his fair cousin Patience waiting for him with a flush on her cheek¹. I do not forget, and I should think shame of myself if I ever forgot, the debt Great Britain owes to its Ironsides and its Covenanters and its Field Preachers. As we look back over the complex history of this country of ours, that is a strain of which we cannot afford to think lightly.

(2) And another thing that is always present to my mind—in its lower strata, if not upon the surface—is the sacrifices which these Nonconformist bodies have made for their religion—so very often sacrifices not made only from their superfluity, but like the widow's mite, all that they had.

Therefore if I use, as I probably shall, words of praise for another type—the type of George Herbert and Henry Vaughan and Nicholas Ferrar and Thomas Ken—it must not be thought that I mean anything in the least aggressive, in the least disparaging, to those who do not conform to it.

And again, if I speak of sacrifices made by the Church of England, I am not for a moment putting them in comparison with the sacrifices made by others who do not belong to that Church. If I refer to sacrifices made for a particular purpose, I am well aware that there may be other sacrifices, made for other purposes, that may or may not be less in amount but certainly are not less in virtue. All that I shall desire to do will be to state plain facts as they are.

And yet, if I aim at conciliation, I know that this is not to be attained by suppressing or watering down convictions. I am no believer in that kind of shallow compromise where one side does not state more than half of its own case in the hope that the other side may do the same. I shall not hesitate to put things strongly, where I feel strongly; so long as it is understood that I mean what I say, and not some other thing that I do not say.

¹ 'Plays and Puritans' in *Miscellanies*, ii. 129-142.

I.

With thus much of preface, I will ask leave to begin by stating the case, as I believe it stands, for the Church of England.

And the first thing that I think should be fully understood is that the great mass of Church people *are thorough-going Denominationalists*.

It is not essential to my argument that they are right in this. In any case, that the Church of England as a body is on the side of Denominationalism is one of the leading factors in the situation. English Roman Catholics as a body, and a not 'very large minority of Nonconformists, are on the same side¹. That means that more than half the whole population cherish denominational ideals. This is a broad fact with which statesmen must reckon, whatever their politics.

I will go further and say, speaking for myself, that I believe this denominational ideal to be right, to be a sound educational principle, and the principle that in practice is best for the nation.

One of the last writings of my lamented friend, Dr. Moberly, was a tract on *Undenominationalism*. In this he exposed with trenchant force the essentially untenable character of the Undenominationalist position.

It is not difficult to see how the idea of Undenominationalism grew up. It grew up as a political expedient to escape the difficulties caused by the claims of rival denominations. The movers in it were not in the first instance the Nonconformists as such, but rather practical statesmen, not hostile to religion, but impatient of what they thought theological subtleties, and desirous of finding

¹ The proportions work out as follows for the latest year (1898) of which I happen to have the statistics before me:—Average school attendances: Church, 41.2 per cent.; British, 5; Wesleyan, 2.7; Roman Catholic, 5.4; Board, 45.7. Voluntary contributions: Church, 76.5; British, 11.1; Wesleyan, 2.3; Roman Catholic, 10.1.

a simple form of religious teaching into which those subtleties did not enter. They were also weary of sectarian jealousies and animosities, and they thought to suppress these by cutting off the material which fed them.

It was a natural, but a mistaken notion. It was a notion that practical statesmen have often had, and tried to carry out. The motive was the same as that which caused the Byzantine Emperor Zeno to put out his *Henotikon*, and Heraclius to put out his *Ecthesis*. They too were weary of theological controversies, and they too tried to suppress them by the action of the State. Such attempts have always failed; the forces of religion have been too strong to be so confined.

The truth is that the religious life is a whole, and that the parts of it hang together in very subtle ways. The region where motive is generated, and character formed, and spiritual forces implanted is just this which is apt to be ignored and set aside as sectarian. And the worst kind of mutilation is mutilation at the roots. It is vain to suppose that we can take one little section of human nature labelled 'morals,' and expect that to stand by itself without any vital relation to its surroundings. At least if we do attempt this we must not be surprised if the result is very far from satisfactory.

I have no wish to complain of the working of the School Board system. On the contrary, I believe that it has probably been worked on the whole almost as well as it could be—far better in practice than might have been expected from the theory. That is the happy inconsistency of so many things in England.

And yet I cannot help wondering to myself how far the School Board system is responsible for the very imperfect Christianization of our great cities. Serious men on all sides must look with deep concern on the indifference to religion of great masses of our population. No doubt this is to a large extent an inheritance from the past. On the

outskirts of real and vital Christianity there has always been much that was merely nominal, and on the outskirts of this there is much more that is not even nominal. It is not of course to be expected that the State as such should attempt to deal with this. But it is not difficult to imagine circumstances in which the State might indirectly have lent valuable assistance to the religious bodies in dealing with it.

Suppose that in 1870, when the great opportunity occurred, instead of inventing its new theory of Undenominationalism, the policy of the State had been frankly denominational. Suppose that the religious bodies had been more encouraged than they were to step into the gap, the State coming liberally to their assistance on the secular side of education, is there not reason to think that the whole outlook of religion in the nation might have been more hopeful than it is? I assume that it is good for the nation as a whole that its citizens should be religious, that as far as possible they should be Christian. If they were but Christian, and really Christian, it would be a very secondary matter to what particular form of Christianity they belonged. Of course there are a few morbid growths; but I think we may assume that the great Christian denominations are all doing good work that could ill be spared.

I do not intend to raise the question why the golden opportunity was not taken. In the general attitude of the public mind at that time, perhaps it was not possible that it should be. Nor, again, do I do more than note it as a fact that the Church of England—and perhaps the Roman Catholics—were the two bodies that came nearest to adopting that line of policy. They both did put forth, and have continued to put forth since that time, a considerable effort to extend their own schools, and to sustain the religious basis of education.

Nonconformists, on the other hand, for the most part,

embraced and supported the alternative policy of Undenominationalism. I suppose that they did so mainly through confidence, which I can quite believe to be well grounded, that they could retain their hold on their own children through the Sunday Schools. There would have been much to be said for this, if each congregation were a little preserve that had only to be kept from external encroachment. It becomes a different matter when we think of each Christian community as a leaven that is to act upon the world outside.

However, it is not for me to judge, and I do not wish to judge. It is easy to see that the Church of England, with its endowments, was at an advantage as compared with the unendowed bodies. One can well believe that many of these must have found it difficult to keep School and Chapel going at the same time. The inducement would no doubt be strong, even at the cost of some loss in definiteness of religious teaching, to seek relief from the strain by handing over the school to the State.

At any rate, what is past is past, and what is done is done. Many complex motives enter into the adoption of a particular policy at a particular time; and, even if a mistake has been made, it is not worth while to spend much time in lamenting over it. Our concern is not with the past, but with the present and the future. I would only ask leave to express my strong conviction that the policy which is best in the interests of the nation, as well as of the Churches, the ideal that we shall do well to hold out before ourselves, is not Undenominationalism, but a thorough-going, even-handed Denominationalism.

The ideal is one thing, the actual is another. I have said that the course taken by the Church of England and the Roman Catholics comes nearest to my own conception of the ideal. But I go on to remark that, as a matter of fact, this particular policy has taken a strong hold of

Church people. They are all but unanimous in favour of it. And if they are all but unanimous, the Roman Catholics are so entirely.

The Church school is an institution that has struck its roots deep into the affections of Churchmen. The life of the parish would be very incomplete without it. It is not Church alone, but Church and School. How many a parish is there scattered over the length and breadth of the land, where parson and schoolmaster have worked happily and quietly together, and which is really a bright spot in our English civilization! I have spoken of types, and in particular of the excellence of the Puritan type as seen at its best. It implies no disparagement of this, nor of any Christian body, if to an English Churchman his own type, seen also at its best, is very dear. It is not a fanatical type; it is not an aggressive type; it is not by nature arrogant or haughty; the English parson dwells among his own people and is one of them, but he brings to them a touch of humanity and culture that is on the average a little above their own. The English parson is the friend of his people, and enters into their homely joys and sorrows. And the schoolmaster is often cast very much in the same mould, and his children take from him an air that holds a happy mean between servility and brusqueness, and that is not without its own simple humanity and rustic culture.

I am tempted to quote a beautiful passage from a Nonconformist, who is not only eminent in his own denomination but gifted with the eye to see and the heart to feel things that lie outside its bounds.

'No voice from the opposite camp touches some of the Nonconformists more deeply than the appeal not to destroy the historic Church, but to turn again and claim our right as Englishmen in that ecclesiastical inheritance which has been so closely interlaced with our great career, not to say our very existence, as a people. We are not all unmoved,

I say, by that appeal. When we linger in the venerable Abbey, now so significantly dwarfed by the huge Parliamentary fabric at its side; when we wander into one of those exquisite village churches in whose number and beauty England is so rich, whose dusky ceiling, resting on thickset Norman columns, is the true image of a piety which does not cease to be sweet because it is rustic and lowly; when we are met by the disarming spectacle of its clergyman offering Christian greeting to such periodical gatherings of Nonconformists as may visit the Bethel of his parish; or when we groan being burdened by an excess of extempore prayer, and turn our longing eyes to the most beautiful liturgy in the world: in such circumstances we cannot refuse to own the spell of the historic Church that once in our borders was sole. Nor can we put aside the yearning speculation whether ever again those roofs will cover, or those words utter, the united religious life of the nation, free in its faith, and re-welded in its soul¹.

To complete the picture we must take in the village school, which bears no insignificant part in the mixing and blending of the colours. There is of course a difference between schools in the country and schools in the town; but *mutatis mutandis* the Church of England puts its stamp upon both. And I will venture to say that in either case the stamp is a good one, very far from being the least of those influences which make one wide-spread type of Englishman what it is.

I have no wish to overstate the case. I do not want to paint either the Church of England, or its schools, or the English race as any better than they are. I desire to make every allowance for such differences in quality as exist in this as in every other human institution. I would speak broadly and on the whole: and I would only ask those who criticize also to look at the facts as broadly and fairly as they can.

I will take the worst that, so far as my knowledge

¹ Dr. P. T. Forsyth, *The Charter of the Church* (London, 1896), p. 66.

goes, has ever been said against our Church Schools. A Nonconformist friend of mine wrote to me some weeks ago :—

‘We cannot object to your teaching your own children your own doctrine. Though even there I am sure you will sympathize with our feeling it deplorable that the children should in many places be systematically taught the sinfulness of entering one of our services.’

In regard to this I would ask leave to say three things, not raising the question—which I could not answer—how far ‘in many places’ and ‘systematically’ could be made good in fact. I would reply: (1) that right-minded Church people would deprecate such teaching with all the earnestness in their power; (2) that, as I have already remarked, the average Churchman—and this applies especially to the rank and file—is not really fanatical or aggressive; that, if he goes his own way he does so undemonstratively, and that as a rule Church and Chapel keep the peace very well; and (3) that, if it is fair to bring up such teaching as I have quoted, it would be equally fair to throw into the other scale all that is said in the pulpit and on the platform about the Scarlet Woman and roads to Rome and the like. I should myself like to suppress this language just as much as the other; and yet, I suspect that those who use it have no other idea than that they are doing God service.

May we not make a clean slate of charges like this?

So far I have been trying to show, and to help our Nonconformist friends really to understand, that Church people are deeply attached to their School system, and attached to it on grounds that are in no way discreditable, but are rather among the best that most of us have for our public actions. To contend for this school system is to them a form of contending *pro aris et focis*.

If a tangible measure were needed of the strength of

this attachment, I might take the following table from the Church of England Year Book for the year 1900:—

VOLUNTARY EXPENDITURE ON CHURCH SCHOOLS AND
TRAINING COLLEGES.

	From 1811 to 1870	From 1870 to 1900	Total
Schools:—	£	£	£
Building . . .	6,270,577	8,141,639	14,412,216
Maintenance . .	8,500,000	17,927,696	26,427,696
Training Colleges:—			
Building . . .	194,085	124,400	318,485
Maintenance . .	185,276	395,647	580,923
	<u>£15,149,938</u>	<u>26,589,382</u>	<u>41,739,320</u>

We may fix our attention mainly on the thirty years since the Education Act of 1870. £26,589,382 is a large sum; and it represents a very great amount of real sacrifice, for it has fallen most heavily upon small people, especially upon the clergy themselves, in a multitude of cases, with diminishing incomes.

Let me repeat, that I make this statement in no spirit of boastfulness. I have no comparisons in my mind; and I am well aware that, if I had, they would only be misleading. I simply refer to a very definite and tangible fact, which stands out in our national history, a fact which no statesman could possibly ignore.

I hope also that it will not be thought that these sacrifices have all been made from an unworthy motive, for the mere aggrandizement of the denomination. I am very sure that this is not the case. I believe that the sacrifices have been made from a strong sense of duty, with a sincere desire to train up, so far as the influence of the Church extends, a God-fearing people.

Nor may it be thought that under the new Act these

sacrifices have come to an end. Churchmen are still under the obligation both to hand over their school buildings in thoroughly good order, and also to maintain them in the future. Here in Oxford the sum that has to be raised to carry out these conditions is estimated at £12,000, the whole of which has to be raised by voluntary contribution. Many a churchman will feel the pinch severely for some time to come.

There is another aspect of the denominational principle. The Church of England has its Catechism, which is a little classic in its way, and really does cover the whole making of character as before God as well as man. To learn the Catechism includes the learning of the Apostles' Creed, which reminds the Christian of his communion with all other Christians throughout the world.

The idea that these simple formularies should be suppressed, and suppressed by law, in schools that have hitherto enjoyed the use of them is intolerable. It would be the symbol of a surrender which Church-people will never bring themselves to make. And what better would the nation be when it had exacted this surrender? It would have only crippled its own resources for the bringing up of religious men and good citizens.

II.

It was some such considerations as these which I have been reviewing that I have no doubt were in the minds of the framers of the Education Acts. They are considerations that could not help being in the minds of public men who were not convinced Secularists. The framers of the Acts have the right to be credited with honest motives. I will make bold to say that nothing they have done justifies an imputation to the contrary.

The case for denominational education rests upon broad general and public grounds. It did not need a complete

acceptance of those grounds for a statesman to feel that a principle so deeply implanted in the beliefs and affections of a full half of the people demanded respect and had a claim to recognition.

I will try to describe what I conceive to have been the real motives in the minds of the statesmen who framed the Education Acts. They started with the belief that denominational teaching was—I will not say the right or the only method, but at least a valuable method, in the educational system of the nation. They found this method in possession of the field on a considerable scale. It had the double claim which a statesman was bound to recognize, both that it was deeply rooted in the affections of great masses of the people, and that the organization in which it was embodied had been built up by prolonged exertions and at a heavy cost. This so-called voluntary system was, further, threatened by a series of measures for which, not it, but the State, was responsible. The State had instituted school boards, wholly supported by public funds, which therefore competed severely with schools which were only partly so supported. And, whereas at first, the deficiency was in part made up by increased fees paid by the parents, this source of income to voluntary schools was cut off by the decision of the State to make all popular education at once gratuitous and compulsory. The denominational schools were thus hard hit, through no fault of their own, and through the operation of measures that were not in the least intended to injure them, but that, by their incidental action, did injure them seriously. A considerate legislature, aware of this, recognized the claim of the denominational schools to relief, if it could be given on equitable principles.

Speaking for myself, I believe that every step in this process of reasoning was just and right, and therefore that the premises from which the Government approached the practical problem were sound premises. The leading motive

was to conserve, and not destroy, what remained of denominational teaching. And the subordinate, or controlling, motive was to do this with all the fairness possible.

At this point, then, we come to the practical bargain struck between the Government and the representatives of the denominational schools; or, less accurately, but perhaps with sufficient accuracy for our purpose, we may say, between the Church and the State.

The position was that the State had made itself responsible for all secular teaching. It therefore proposed to take over the whole cost of the secular teaching in Church (or denominational) schools, but on such terms as not to destroy their denominational character.

It may be said that this was from the first an illogical proceeding. Perhaps it is not the perfection of logic. But, happily, our English Parliament and our English people care less than most for being rigorously logical. It has been their habit to look more at the interests and well-being of flesh and blood than at the complete symmetry of an idea. Therefore the State, though for itself severely secular, yet recognizes and respects the work of the denominations in seeking to bring up their own children in their own religion.

That was in general terms the object of the compact.

I am getting into the region of more disputable propositions; and I can quite imagine that some of my readers may wish to stop me and say, 'Yes, but the Church has not been content with teaching its own children, but has so contrived that it teaches a good many Nonconformist children as well.'

I admit the fact, and I hope to deal with it more directly in a moment. I admit the fact, and I also regret it, because it complicates unfortunately the whole question. From my point of view, I should have much preferred that Nonconformist children had been in Nonconformist schools,

that could be treated on precisely the same footing as the Church schools. A few are, but the great majority are not, and a certain proportion are actually in the Church schools.

Reserving this difficulty for the present, and coming back to the compact between Church and State, I may begin by pointing out—what seems to be too often strangely forgotten—that the Church *did not come to it empty-handed*. It brought with it a very substantial asset in the shape of its school-buildings.

I have seen estimates of the value of these which seem to me exaggerated; but we have only to look back to the Tables on p. 13 above to see that it must be very considerable; it must at least amount to several millions¹.

Now if a man offers you a sovereign and you accept it, he has a right to an adequate return. The Church took out the value of its asset in the form of safe-guarding its denominational teaching.

There is therefore, I cannot help saying, a very serious fallacy underlying a great portion of the arguments against the Education Acts. One constantly sees the statement that the schools which have hitherto been denominational and supported in part by voluntary subscriptions are now henceforth 'maintained by the State.' They are not wholly but only partially so maintained. The State did not build the schools; they are, as the Acts call them, 'non-provided.' They still remain the property of the denominations.

This one fact seems to me to make all the difference. I make bold to say that it cuts away the ground at once from under the 'Passive Resisters.' They refuse to pay

¹ The Archbishop of Canterbury gave the estimate as not less than £22,000,000, but I find it difficult to reconcile so large a sum with the Tables on p. 13 above, where I suppose that 'maintenance' covers all school expenses, and not maintenance of the fabric only. We must, of course, allow for depreciation.

their rates because by so doing they suppose themselves to be paying for religious teaching of which they do not approve.

I know enough of the Passive Resisters to know that they contain among their number many excellent people. But they must forgive me for saying that in this supposition of theirs they are labouring under a complete delusion. They do not pay a penny towards the religious teaching in non-provided schools. The payment for this comes out of the fund represented by the value of the school buildings.

It is a cumbrous and strangely unsymmetrical arrangement, if you will. To equate school buildings with religious teaching is a feat worthy of Englishmen, and of which perhaps they alone are capable. And yet, whatever else may be said of this transaction, it is at least not 'unjust.'

The only ground on which its justice could be questioned would be that the price paid was insufficient. But that can hardly be said. The Church gives to the State very tangible money's worth. It receives back in return two things: the right to use its own formularies, and the right to appoint its own teachers; in other words, the right to make sure that they are qualified to give religious teaching. The two things together, I believe, take nothing from the State that it need care to lose, but are really in its best interests. I would myself far rather have a religious teacher, no matter of what denomination, than one with slightly higher intellectual credentials. As a complete man, to train those who are to be complete men and to fulfil all the complex duties of citizenship, I should give him a decided preference.

On this, however, there is more to be said. I limit myself for the present to the one point that the State has really made an excellent bargain. It receives a very substantial benefit, and it gives what it ought not to miss.

The upshot of the whole matter is that whatever privileges

the Church has retained through its compact with the State, are bought and paid for.

I cannot therefore, on any conditions, admit that there has been 'injustice.' But I do admit that there is a certain amount of anomaly and inequality. Even if one has bought and paid for an advantage over one's neighbour, it still remains an advantage.

That is why the Nonconformists are sore ; but I would invite them to look at this point a little more closely. I would submit to them that their grievance is not really so great as they suppose. I have just said that I cannot call it an injustice, though I can call it an inequality. There are many inequalities in the world that do not amount to injustice. One man has coal under his property, and his next neighbour has not. That is an advantage to the first, but it is no injustice to the second. It is somewhat analogous to this, that the Church brought an asset to its bargain with the State that the Nonconformists did not, or not in the same degree. Where the analogy fails, it is rather in favour of the Church. That there should be coal under a man's property may be a geological accident ; that the Church had its schools, was due to its own efforts and its own sacrifices. The Church, I submit, has no more than it deserves.

My only regret is that the Free Churches are not in the same position. I should be only too glad if there were British schools scattered all over the land, that could make for themselves as good terms as the Church has made. That, I conceive, would be by far the best solution of the whole problem. I only fear that the time for it is past.

I do not blame Nonconformists for letting slip their opportunity. I would only ask them to remember that the opportunity has been there. And if they think that the Church has stolen a march upon them, I would remind them that they deliberately identified their cause with that

of the State Schools, the competition of which has put such severe pressure upon the Church. Ever since 1870 they have had the full benefit of this identification; they have been relieved of the heavy tax which the Church took upon itself, and they have not been exposed to severe competition as the Church has been exposed.

The impartial historian who looks out on the course of passing events, sees one body gain an advantage here and another there, just as in the case of private individuals. But advantages of this kind are not to be treated as injustice or grievance. They are rather to be taken with good humour, as individuals mostly take them, because he who loses to-day may gain to-morrow.

The statesman, like the historian, looks out on passing events, but with a greater sense of responsibility, and with a more active sympathy. I hope I am not myself a partisan in politics. I hold no brief for the Unionist Government. But, as I followed the debate on the Education Bill in the House of Commons, I could not help being struck by what seemed to me to be its evident anxiety to make the Bill as acceptable as possible to those who did not benefit directly by it. Two important concessions were made to them: (1) They were given a voice—not a preponderating, but an effective voice—in the management of the non-provided schools; and (2) provision was made that pupil-teachers should as a rule be appointed by the educational authority and not by the (denominational) managers; and it was also stipulated that Nonconformists might be appointed as assistant teachers.

I welcome especially this last provision. When I began to make inquiries into this subject of education, it was a surprise to me to find that Nonconformist children have been taught in what have hitherto been Church schools to so large an extent as they have. It is very right that the interests of these children and of their parents should be

safeguarded as far as possible. In the smallest schools not very much could be done. But in schools of a certain size a Nonconformist assistant might be appointed, who should take the children into a class-room when the religious instruction was being given. I am glad to see that the Archbishop of Canterbury favours this step, and I should have every hope that it may be widely adopted.

I was more doubtful about the introduction of outside members into the boards of management. This would bring in an inharmonious element into the management of the schools, which it was easy to see might cause friction out of proportion to the real good that would be done by it. Still, I have so much sympathy with the desire to meet opponents that, here too, I should not disapprove. On the whole, however, I am left with the impression that the denominational character of the schools hangs on a very slender thread.

The chief strand in that thread is the head-teacher. If religion is to be taught, it must be taught by one who believes in it. And if a school is to have a religious character impressed upon it, that character can be impressed upon it effectively by no one but its head. Unity of direction and of spirit can come from no other source.

Take away the head-teacher, and this unity must be inevitably lost. If the religious teaching is committed to any one else, one of two things must happen: either the subject must suffer or the teacher; either what should be the most important lesson of all will be thrust into the background, or the children will see their head-teacher superseded just where his authority should be greatest.

Another serious difficulty would be the difficulty of finding a substitute. Even if the clergy were allowed to do, and did, all they could, they could never take the place of the teacher always on the spot and trained specially for the purpose. Schoolmaster and clergyman together are one thing, clergyman alone another.

For these reasons it seems to me that the right of appointing head-teachers cannot be surrendered. And yet I must confess that there is an anomaly. The compact is that the State takes the secular side of education, while it leaves to the Church the religious side. But at this point the Church encroaches outside its province—as the teacher cannot be cut in two, the religious half of him carries with it the secular.

What we have to say is (1) that the point is absolutely essential to the principle of the Acts, and the maintenance of any effective form of denominational teaching; (2) that if it represents a privilege the privilege is one that is bought and paid for, it comes within the purchase-money, which is indeed paid for this more than for anything else; (3) that it is no new thing, but only continues a state of things that has long existed, and that is not extended by the Acts but rather restricted.

Still, I cannot but agree that there is an anomaly which I should be glad to see removed, if it were possible. But it seems to me too much to ask, that for the sake of this anomaly—allowed for, and compensated for—we should wreck a whole scheme which alone is just to the children of the Church, and is I believe equally good for the Church and for the nation.

III.

I come now to the alternative scheme proposed by the committee of the Free Church council.

This is very simple in its character; and it is true that it avoids anomalies and inequalities by making a clean sweep of everything denominational. It lays down amongst other things: 'that all schools maintained by public funds, whether by rates or taxes, shall be under the sole management and control of representatives appointed by the method of popular election'; 'that no ecclesiastical

or theological tests shall be applied in the appointment of teachers of publicly-supported schools or training colleges'; 'that no distinctively denominational teaching or formula shall be given or used in public schools in school hours, but simple Biblical instruction may be given according to a syllabus, as is general at present in provided schools.'

Indirectly, if not directly, this scheme would wipe out of existence all denominational schools, because such schools cannot exist without State aid on the secular side.

Probably the proposals are meant as a declaration of war. They are meant to lead up to a trial of strength at the polls. They are an announcement beforehand of the use to which victory would be put, if it were won.

This is quite frank; and from that point of view we cannot complain. If the appeal is to arms, to arms it must be.

But the object with which I am writing, and the claims which I am trying to discuss, are not those of force but of justice. I have done what I could to estimate exactly the weight of the objections that are brought by Nonconformists, and may fairly be brought, against the Acts. And it may be worth while (putting aside the declaration of war, which has not yet been actually delivered) to ask Nonconformists to weigh in turn what their ultimatum means from the point of view of justice.

I would ask them, first, definitely to face the fact that they are seeking to override, and to override by force, the settled conviction of what is probably quite half the population. I presume that they will have considered the expediency of this, and their chances of success, from their own point of view. They will of course remember that they will have the Roman Catholics opposed to them as well as the Church of England. It is not my business to speculate as to their chances whether of success or of

failure. I would only ask them, as Christians, to consider the application of the principle of doing as one would be done by. In a free country like England there has been a steady growth of opinion in favour of respecting the deliberate preferences of any large section of the population. Nonconformists themselves are the standing example of the measure of this growth. The State would greatly hesitate, indeed it would refuse, to press upon them anything really distasteful in their own communions. Why then should they try to force the Church against its will into an undenominational system?

They claim the right to do this on the ground that they are themselves affected, as contributing to the rates and taxes by which education is kept up. The Church replies that it does not ask them to contribute to the religious portion of the education. It claims that this is paid for out of the fund represented by the value of the school buildings. It is very important that Nonconformists should examine the validity of this claim, and not ignore it as they so often do; because, unless it is answered in the negative, it must be difficult to justify their interference with what Church-people desire for themselves.

This is one broad preliminary issue that I think ought to be decided. I go on to consider the justice and general expediency of the Free Church scheme regarded in itself.

I have a strong suspicion that if this scheme were carried out, Nonconformists themselves would be disappointed with it.

I observe that the Free Churches contemplate, very fairly, buying out 'on equitable terms' the Church from its schools. They do this in order to clear the ground for the completely secular system.

The purchase-money for the fabrics of the Church schools, we have seen, would amount to a large sum. That

sum would have to come out of rates or taxes, and the people would feel the cost very severely. They would see this large sum—several millions at least, or the interest on several millions—handed over to the Church; and they would soon begin to complain that the Church was receiving a second endowment. My belief is that the discontent in the Nonconformist ranks would soon be greater even than it is.

It would be rather less invidious, but in other ways worse, if the rate-payers were not to buy the Church schools but to build new schools of their own. To build new schools would certainly cost more than to take over schools already existing.

It seems to me quite inevitable that the process of starting the completely secular scheme should be very costly, and no less inevitable that the Church should seem to gain an advantage in the course of it. This must be so, because the Church has a valuable asset in the possession of its buildings, which the Nonconformists have not in anything like the same degree.

For these reasons, if the State did not actually confiscate the Church schools (as the Welsh Councils would probably want to do), I believe that the rank and file of the Free Churches would be not only disappointed with the fruits of their victory, but might even find the last state worse than the first.

If we take a larger view and look at the whole transaction from the point of view not of a class or party but of the nation, we are at once struck by the great amount of waste that would be involved.

The Church is to receive certain sums as purchase-money, or rental, for its schools. It has not asked for this money, but it would not be at a loss to find uses for it. One of the uses to which it would be put in many cases would be to build rooms or parochial halls for Sunday schools and the like. Thus, from the point of view of the nation (i. e.

the rate- or tax-payers), the old school buildings would be simply duplicated at extravagant cost.

In the meantime there is the religious education: How would that fare? It is left to take care of itself. It is taken out of the hands of the natural teachers, those who teach the child in other subjects, who are specially trained for the work and have made it their profession. It is taken from these and transferred more or less to amateurs; while the children are led to regard the religious lesson as something outside the real work of the school, which they can take as perfunctorily as they please.

There is one class who might rejoice over such a prospect: that is the professed secularists and unbelievers, who make their profit out of the dissensions of Christians. But I cannot easily understand how it can be acceptable to the religious Nonconformist, who desires both to practise religion himself and to see the nation religious.

IV.

However I have not much fear that all these consequences will really come to pass, because I find it hard to believe that the nation will take the bare negations of the Free Churches Council as they stand. I have been considering this scheme because it is the one that most directly confronts the policy of the Acts. But a spirit of experiment is abroad, and there are other schemes in the air. Just as I am writing there has been made public a series of proposals known as the 'Durham Concordat,' and offered by the County Council of Durham to the representatives of the denominations.

These proposals are rather elaborately adjusted, but their leading points appear to be these. (1) The school-buildings are taken over for a term of years 'at a nominal rent.' (2) The management will be in the hands of a board on which the denomination may be fairly expected

to have a majority. (3) Teachers are appointed by the county council at the recommendation of the managers. (4) Biblical teaching of a rather more thorough kind than has hitherto prevailed in board schools will be given four days a week in those schools and three days a week in what have been denominational schools. (5) On the fifth day in Board (or provided) schools, and on two days a week in denominational (or non-provided) schools, there will be a right of entry to the clergy and ministers of all denominations, or to persons appointed by them, who shall be allowed to give the distinctive religious teaching of the body to which they belong. (6) The county council will in certain circumstances make themselves responsible for the repairs that would otherwise fall upon the denomination.

Two questions appear to arise in connexion with these proposals: one immediate and practical, the other more distant and theoretical. The first is, Are the proposals such as the representatives of the Church in the county of Durham would do well to accept? The other is, Do they furnish a basis for a possible future solution of the difficulties? It seems to me that there may be more hope of answering the second question in the affirmative than the first.

I should have great doubts whether it would be wise for Churchmen in the county of Durham to act separately from Churchmen elsewhere. They are asked to surrender very definite rights, secured to them by law, which they might not afterwards be able to recover. Then the terms of the bargain seem to me somewhat one-sided. The schools are to be leased at a merely nominal rent. I fail to see that sufficient reason is given for this: indeed, a little further on, the Church is invited to subscribe money to pay its religious teachers. I do not see why, if the Church relinquishes almost all control over its buildings, which have a very tangible value, it should not receive some

payment for them. In consideration of the rights of entry (which cost no one anything), the payment might be made quite moderate—say, one-half of the real annual value. This would be some set-off against the expenses thrown upon the denomination.

I should further doubt whether the County Council is really within its powers in proposing such a concordat. In so doing, it seems to me rather to be stepping into the place of the legislature, and acting as a legislative body on a rather narrow basis.

On the other hand it occurs to me that the schools might be grouped three or four together, and that special (trained) teachers might be appointed for the purpose of giving the religious instruction. They might go from school to school, and devote themselves entirely to this work.

But I would rather not express an opinion upon the feasibility of this scheme as a whole. That is better left to the experts, who will doubtless give their full attention to it. In any case I fear that, unless worked with great consideration, and even if it is so worked, it must seriously impair the efficiency of what have hitherto been denominational schools, as such.

The one real attraction of the scheme is that it throws open the provided (or Board) schools to denominational teaching. I am glad to see that this feature enters into several of the schemes that have recently been proposed. That it should do so, and that Nonconformist opinion in particular should be coming round to it, is the most hopeful sign in the whole situation.

My object however has not been to discuss the alternative schemes, otherwise than from the one point of view of considering how far they offer relief from the existing tension. I would fain hope that what I have said earlier in this paper may go to show that, even under the Acts as they are, the grievances of Nonconformists are not quite so great as some of them suppose, and that the part played

by the Church has been neither so grasping nor so harmful as they have allowed themselves to believe. To prepare a better scheme must take some time; and, while it is preparing, I submit that the best course is to work the Acts honestly on the lines on which they were framed.

In the *Pilot* of January 16, 1904, there appeared a signed article by Dr. Fairbairn, to which the following letter was sent in reply:—

SIR,—Dr. Fairbairn's article in the last number of the *Pilot* is a very powerful appeal. But I cannot help asking, Is it not too powerful, too impassioned, for its occasion? I know that a writer cannot help being influenced by the atmosphere round him: and the atmosphere round Dr. Fairbairn is no doubt highly charged. I am sorry to find that I differ widely from my friend on most parts of the question—as to the true character of the Education Acts, as to the course of events which led up to them, and as to the motives of their authors. But as I have just been putting my views on the subject into print, and as I hope that they may soon be before the public, I will say no more on this head.

The difference between Dr. Fairbairn and myself I am afraid is quite fundamental; but I am glad to think that it turns on a question that is really practical, and not one of religious opinion. The gist of his article is contained in a few sentences which I will ask leave to quote.

'In England the whole education question has been cursed by our past; it is taken to be an incident or a stage in the historic struggle between Church and Dissent. To me it is infinitely more than that, it is a method for the making of the people, the education of their manhood, the training of the citizen to the prompt and efficient discharge of all his civil and social and humane duties. Now I hold

that the primary power and responsibility belong to the church and the home, and only the secondary to the school. As the former are the latter will be; no school, whatever its atmosphere, can be better than the homes out of which the children come, and no home purer or stronger than the church to which the parents belong. The education of parents is thus the first duty of every church; and if this be neglected, no degree of attention to the school will ever repair the consequences of this primary neglect. Hence I hold that education may be all the more godly that there is neither creed nor catechism, neither church formulary nor atmosphere in the school, while it may be more profane and godless than the wit of man can conceive if the school be remembered and the home forgotten.'

With the exordium of this passage I most cordially agree. There is nothing I more earnestly desire than that we could treat the whole question as simply one of the national welfare, quite apart from Church and Dissent. But when I pass on to what follows, it seems to me strange that a writer of my friend's ability and clear-sightedness could possibly commit himself to such an argument. It comes, I cannot help thinking, from the fact that Nonconformity has its strength so overwhelmingly in the middle classes. I cannot conceive how Dr. Fairbairn could write as he does if he had had much to do with the very poor. He writes as if there were no such thing as slums; indeed as though there were nothing but the 'grave livers' of Wordsworth's poem, the sober, God-fearing households from which Nonconformity draws its adherents. He bids us first convert the outside masses, first make good Christians of the parents, and then leave them to deal with the children. An excellent counsel of perfection, but very far away from the world we live in! I believe that the Church of England is really making a very genuine, and in many places a devoted effort to carry out this advice. But the work is excessively difficult; it is difficult in the first instance even to catch the parents—really to engage them at close quarters—with men and women alike hard at their drudgery all day, and naturally and pardonably caring nothing for religion. To wait until these are converted

before anything is done for the religion of the children is like waiting for the Greek kalends. Oxford is not a very poverty-stricken place; but I should like to take Dr. Fairbairn through some of our slums here, and then take him to the Church school, and ask him how much of its tone and temper, how much of what there is humane in it, is derived from the parents.

There are really three agencies which aim at training up children in the fear of God: the church, the school, the home. I willingly allow that in many cases the home is the most effective. But what sort of proportion do these cases bear to all our crowded millions? For one child that may safely be left to the home, there must be half a dozen (including some from all classes) who get their best training from the school. Even supposing that the proportion were more nearly equal than it is, can the nation afford—can it for a moment afford—to throw away such an instrument as the school?

I think of our Oxford schools as a type of numbers throughout the country; and it is because Dr. Fairbairn's scheme (even his, and much more that put forward by the Committee of the Free Churches Council) would destroy these, that Churchmen band themselves together for resistance. It is pitiful to think that the question should be treated as though it were only one of grasping after more on the part of the Church. It is really the soul's welfare of these poor helpless children that is at stake. I say that he who seeks to destroy the Church schools as such, as places not only of education but of religious education, is seeking to destroy one of the most precious things in the whole of our English civilization. The opinion may be discounted as that of a Churchman; but I should say the same of all the denominational schools, British and Wesleyan and Roman Catholic as well.

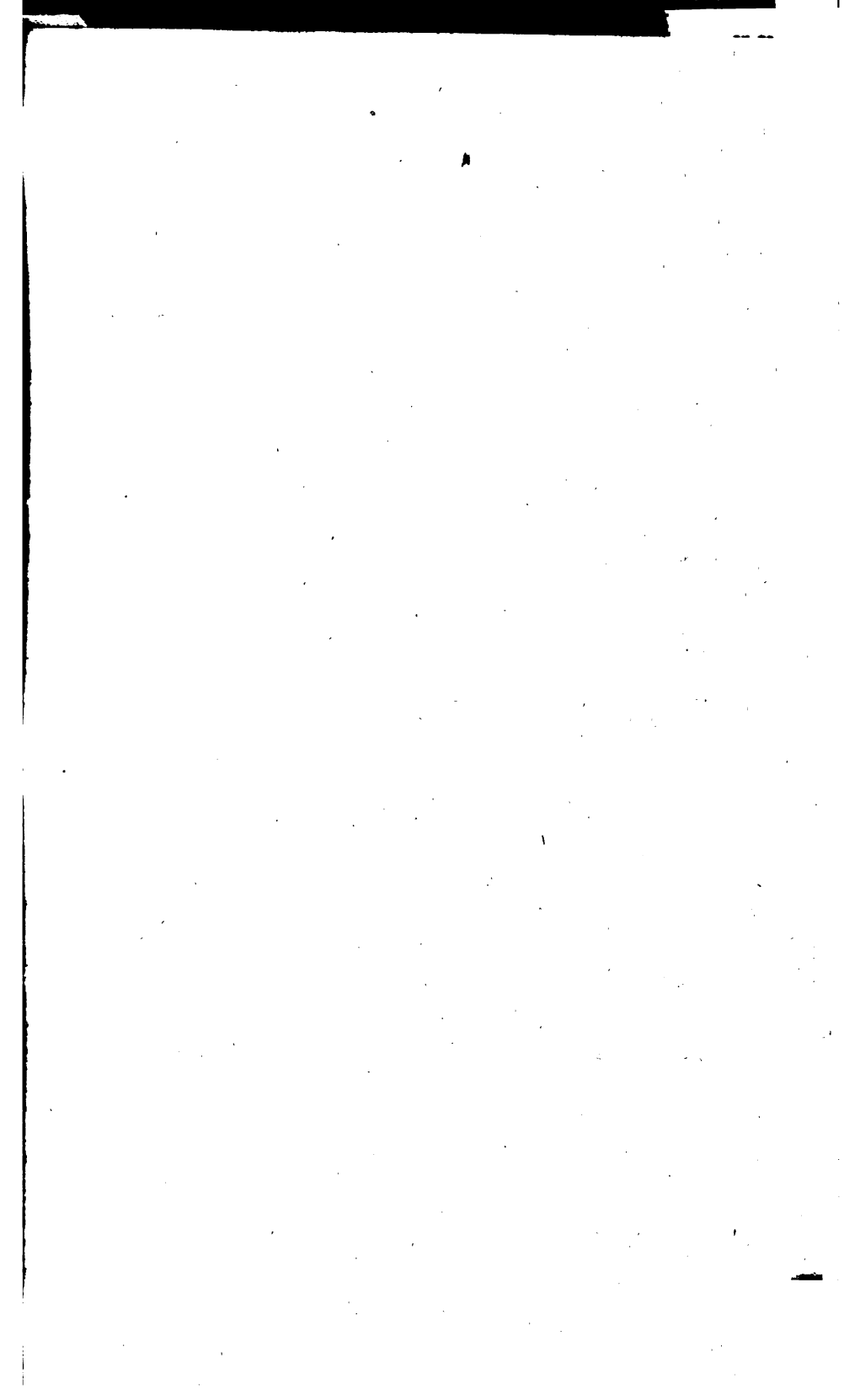
But I must not part from Dr. Fairbairn without recognizing the effort that he makes in the cause of religion. I thank him sincerely for laying down the principle 'that every church or society shall be free to seek out and teach its own children at stated times.' I shall not forget that he has laid down this principle. I do not forget that

others have laid it down. It is a point on which at last the public mind seems to be clearing itself; and I regard it as the one gleam of hope in the prospect before us.

I am a long way from thinking that Dr. Fairbairn's scheme is the best for English education, though I admit that it is the most logical. 'My heart's wae' for many things that seem likely enough to be trampled out of existence. But, if it must needs be, if it is the irreducible price that must be paid for a reunited nation, if our Iphigenia must be sacrificed to bring a fair wind to the Achaeans, in that case I should be in favour of Dr. Fairbairn's scheme as saving something from the wreck and as, in the provided schools, doing something more.

W. SANDAY.

OXFORD,
January 18, 1904.



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